

DRINK 8 TO HYDRATE



Fluid is essential to health. Your body is made up of approximately 60% water.

Signs that you are not drinking enough include dark urine, passing urine less frequently, headaches, tiredness and lack of concentration.

Good hydration can help you:

- ◆ Be more alert
- ◆ Concentrate better
- ◆ Sleep better at night
- ◆ Have more energy
- ◆ Remember things better
- ◆ Have fewer urine infections
- ◆ Reduce irritation to your bladder
- ◆ Control when you need to pass urine

Everyone is different, but as a guide you should drink about 1.5 - 2 litres (6 - 8 glasses) of fluid a day.

What Counts?

Fluid does not mean just water. There are many other drinks and foods that provide fluid including:

- Squash
- Tea
- Coffee
- Pop
- Milk
- Soup
- Jelly
- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Salad

Some people find it difficult to drink enough fluid. This can be for a variety of different reasons including:

- Being told to drink water which they do not like
- Fear of not getting to the toilet in time, or needing to go at night
- Difficulty in making drinks, for example unable to open jars or lift a heavy kettle
- Difficulty picking up cups
- Unable to walk to get a drink or go to the toilet.

These people often become dehydrated which can be avoided. If the tips over the page do not help, ask your GP or nurse for help.

Keep Hydrated - advice for people who struggle to drink enough

If you are concerned that you will have to urinate more often if you drink more.

- Your body will adapt to taking in more fluid. Your bladder will stretch, so after a few days of drinking more, your body will return to its usual patterns.

If you have been told that only water counts as fluid.

- This is not true. Water, tea, coffee, squash, milk and juice are all fluids and count towards your 6 - 8 cups a day.

If you have been told that you have a sensitive or overactive bladder.

- Its important to drink more as being dehydrated can make your bladder more sensitive.
- Caffeine containing drinks such as coffee, tea and chocolate can make irritation worse.
- Drinks high in sugar or acid such as fruit juice, pop and squash can also irritate your bladder.
- Try decaffeinated tea or coffee, or caffeine free, low acidic drinks such as water, water flavoured with cucumber or mint, Rooibos, herbal or fruit teas and infusions.

If you can't get up to make a drink.

- Ask carers to make up flasks of hot or cold drinks to place by your chair or bed. If you find it difficult opening a flask, an insulated cup or mug will keep the drink hot or colder for longer.

If you can't pick up kettles, cups, glasses or mugs easily.

- You can buy kettle holders or mini water heaters. Or try a plastic travel kettle.
- There are many adaptive cups on the market such as two handled cups, anti-shake mugs or lightweight plastic mugs and glasses.
- Instead of trying to pick up the cup, glass, or bottle, use a straw.

Tips on how to increase your fluid intake:

- ◆ Have a drink when you get up, with every meal and when you go to bed.
- ◆ Have a full cup of fluid with medication rather than a few sips.
- ◆ Have drinks between meals.
- ◆ Prepare drinks in advance - fill a jug or flask at the start of the day and aim to finish the contents by midday.
- ◆ Set an alarm at specific times to remind you to drink.
- ◆ Increase your intake of fruit, salad and vegetables.
- ◆ Buy a drinks bottle and carry water around with you.

Remember to drink more when:

- ◆ When it is hot: during the summer, when visiting hot countries, when you have the heating on.
- ◆ During and after exercise.
- ◆ If you get an infection or feel like you might be getting one. For example a bad cold or an urinary tract infection.
- ◆ When in air conditioned rooms or flying.

